

7.9 Illness, Exclusion Times and Infectious Diseases Policy

Policy number: 7.9
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Reviewed by: Child Care Team

This policy relates to	
National Quality Standards Early Childhood Education & Care	2.1 Health, 2.1.1 Well being and comfort, 2.1.2 Health practices and procedures
	7.22(a) Health & Hygiene Commitment plan 7.10 Immunisation Policy

Purpose

The service aims to care for the health and wellbeing of children in care and follows exclusion times for contagious illnesses in order to minimise spread of infections.

Policy

The chain of infection refers to the way in which germs spread. All the steps in the chain need to occur for germs to spread from one person to another. By breaking the chain, you can prevent and control infections. It is important to remember that the chain can be broken at any stage.



The most important ways to break the chain of infection and stop the spread of diseases are:

- Effective hand hygiene;
- Exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff;
- Immunisation.

Other strategies to prevent infection include:

- Cough and sneeze etiquette;
- Appropriate use of gloves;
- Effective environmental cleaning.

If a child is ill at home and there is a possibility the child may be suffering from an infectious illness, this needs to be clarified and a medical diagnosis provided before the child is admitted into child care. The educator should request a clearance letter where there is any concern that a child may be contagious.

As the needs of all children in care must be considered, children with infectious illnesses must be excluded from care as recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council of 1992 and detailed in the current edition of "Staying Healthy in Child Care". All educators are supplied with a copy of this publication.

In addition, Service policy requires a child be excluded from care for at least 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.

Children presenting with rashes, vomiting, diarrhoea, high temperatures, coughing (coughing that is of concern) will be excluded from care unless cleared by a doctor. A child may have a rash or temperature and appear well but these are signs that the child may have a virus and could have the potential to be contagious, the service will require for the child to be free of the rash or temperature before returning to care.

Coughs have the potential to be contagious and can have serious consequences, educators will discuss concerns with the parents and may require clearance letters before children return to ensure the well-being of all children.

The educator is required to notify parents of children being educated and cared for at the service when there is an infectious disease. This should be done only by advising families of the illness without identifying the child that was ill.

A child who becomes ill in care with a high temperature may only be given one single dose of paracetamol when a signed Health Plan is in place and after cooling down procedures have been followed and the temperature has not decreased. Parents need to be contacted to arrange immediate collection of the child as the temperature is a sign of the child being unwell. The service should also be contacted.

If a child develops an infectious illness i.e. vomiting or diarrhoea, the educator will contact the parent to collect the child immediately.

If there is no rash, vomiting or diarrhoea, it is the educator's decision (based on other symptoms and wellbeing of the child) to identify if a child is unwell and needs to be collected from care. This information should be discussed with the coordination unit. If the educator or a member of the

family has an infectious illness, the educator is required to make themselves unavailable for care. (Refer 5.1 Absences from Care Policy).

Cases of some infectious diseases are required to be notified to the local public health department. Public health staff can provide useful advice, support and resources to help manage outbreaks. Gold Coast Public Health Unit on (07) 5687 9000 during business hours or 13 Health (13 432 584) after hours, or your General Practitioner. Email gcphucdc@health.qld.au.

A clearance letter may be requested by the educator or the service if a child has an injury or illness that may pose further risk to themselves or other children, or if the child is observed by the educator to not be well enough to attend care. If the clearance letter does not provide enough information and there is still concern that the child is not well, or it is not safe for the child to return to care, further information will be sought from the doctor with the parent's permission prior to returning to care.

If there is more than one child presenting with a similar illness that could be contagious clearance letters will be requested from doctors to ensure the well-being of all children. In situations where there are multiple children with the same symptoms there will be consultation with the Public Health Unit for recommended practice to reduce the spread of the illness. All families will be advised in this occurrence.

Relevant Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 4,88,168(2)(c)
National Standards 2.1

Key Resources

National Health and Medical Research Council: (2006) *Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care 5th Edition*
www.nhmrc.gov.au/
www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/ch55
www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/ch43 Refer to Table 1.1 Recommended minimum exclusion periods in SHICC
www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/subject/General%20Health%20Information
Queensland Health Communicable Diseases Branch
The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne: Childcare and Children's Health Vol 8 No 3 (May 2005) *Infection Control and Some Common Infections in Young Children*
www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/econnections/CCH_Vol8_No3_May2005.pdf
www.rch.org.au/econnections/publications/index.cfm?doc_id=11283
The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne: Childcare and Children's Health Vol 11 No 2 – *Fever in Babies and Children*
www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/econnections/CCH_Vol_11_No2_June_2008.pdf

Related Policies

[Appendix H Safe Work Practice](#)

